

Bear River North Regional Council Meeting Minutes
Bridgerland Applied Technology College
Logan, Utah
Wednesday, August 9th, 2006 – 8:00 A.M. – 9:30 A.M.

In attendance:

David Farnes	Pioneer Care and Rehabilitation
Vern Gunnell	United States Air Force, B.A.T.C. Cache County
Randy Hopkins	State of Utah, Department of Workforce Services
Jim Hooker	Hooker Appliance
Roger Jones	Bear River Association of Governments
Mike Liechty	Cache School District
Peggy Madsen	Box Elder County Employees
Evan Maxfield	Wheatland Seed
Lana Powell	State Farm Insurance
Bruce Rigby	Zions Bank
Dawn Skorka (Chair)	Wal-Mart
Thom Smith	La-Z-Boy
Susan Thackeray	Economic Development, Box Elder County

Excused:

Grant Bartholomew	State of Utah, Human Services, Child & Family Services
David Bryan	Schreiber Foods
Commissioner William Cox	County Commissioner, Rich County
Colyn Flinders	Division of Rehabilitation
Commissioner John Hansen	Cache County Council Member
Kelly Johnson	E.A. Miller
Chad Munns	Munns Manufacturing
Commissioner Suzanne Rees	County Commissioner, Box Elder County
Scott Williams	U.S.U. Extension Agent 4-H Youth Development
Michelle Wilson	Life-Skill and Individual Needs Center

Department of Workforce Services Staff:

Julie Anderson	Employment Counseling Program Specialist
Debbie Herr	Regional Program Manager
Gary Kennison	Business Services Program Specialist
Carrie Peterson	Administrative Secretary
Debbie Sparks	Logan Area Manager
Susan Wright	Council Support Specialist

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m.

1. **Welcome**

Dawn Skorka, Chair of the Bear River North Regional Council, welcomed all D.W.S. staff and Council members to the meeting.

The quorum for the meeting was established with sufficient attendance of voting council members to carry all action items and motions.

2. **Consent Calendar Action Items**

Dawn Skorka called for approval of the Consent Calendar with a motion to approve the minutes from the March 15th and May 10th, 2006 meetings.

Action: Roger Jones made the motion, Susan Thackeray seconded, and the Council unanimously approved the minutes from both meetings.

3. **Committee Reports**

A. Marketing and Training for Employers Task Force

Evan Maxfield reported that the Marketing and Training for Employers Task Force is planning the Employer Summit half-day legal seminar for employers. Information on the "Ready to Work" soft skills program will be available for employers and job seekers. D.W.S. employer services information will be made available.

The task force considered the State Council's focus to develop their goals for the year at the Strategic Planning Session.

B. Training and Job Seekers Committee Report

Thom Smith and Lana Powell reported that the Training and Job Seekers Committee has pursued the development of the "Ready to Work" curriculum with the Bridgerland Applied Technology College.

Lana Powell reported the Training Task Force met to review the assessment questions that are being developed for the soft skills training. Lana noted that the assessment encompasses all aspects of the soft skills needed to maintain employment. Lana expects the assessment questions to be approved for the soft skills training.

Thom reported that he spoke with Wendy Brogue who is managing the enrollment of the class, and she reported that they have eight to ten enrollees. The Task Force will be working to get the information out to the employers. Thom expects that the soft skill course will be driven by the needs of employers.

Action: Susan Thackeray made the motion, Peggy Madsen seconded, and the Council unanimously approved the Marketing / Training for Employers, and the Training /Job Seekers Committee reports.

4. **Regional Youth Council Report**

Julie Anderson reported for Scott Williams, Youth Council Chair. The Youth Council representatives were provided with a report on the youth leadership project. Twenty local youth were given the opportunity to develop the job sites and participate in placement. The youth had seven weeks to participate in the project.

The federal reporting requirements have changed to common measures for the W.I.A. Youth Program to include:

- Placement in Employment or Education
- Attainment of a Degree or Certificate
- Literacy and Numeracy Gains

Bridgerland Applied Technology College will be providing the youth with the required testing. The local partnership agreement for the area is being finalized. The partnership will support the foster care transition to adult living initiative.

There have been four foster care youth who have graduated from the program; three of those have enrolled in post-secondary education.

Action: Peggy Madsen made the motion, Susan Thackeray seconded, and the Council unanimously approved the Regional Youth Council report.

5. **State Council Report**

- Dawn Skorka reported on the highlights of the State Council meeting. She reported that the State Council meeting agenda, minutes, and schedule are available on the D.W.S. website jobs.utah.gov.
- Tani Pack-Downing provided the D.W.S. Executive Director's report.
- Attendees were informed of the following new appointments made within the Department's Executive Management Team:
 - Greg Gardner – D.W.S. Deputy Director.
 - Marvin Dodge – D.W.S. Manager of Planning and Budget.
- Federal funding cuts that will reduce the Department's budget are driving D.W.S. to create efficiencies in order to continue to provide services with less funding. \$6.6 M needs to be absorbed by the Department this fiscal year.
- For FY'07 there was a budget shortfall for the General Assistance (G.A.) program. D.W.S. will be considering how the program will be managed in the future.
- The Department will try to become more creative with the delivery of services. The Department will be looking at the modernization of eligibility functions to improve services, outcomes, and the service delivery model. The possibility of utilizing technology for telecommuting, imaging, and a call center will be explored.
- Other states are looking at privatization for the management of the programs in order to continue to provide services based on the reduced funding.
- Executive Management's goal is not to reduce staff by layoffs, but achieve the recommended staffing levels through attrition and by hiring only when needed.
- Eligibility processes, unemployment services, and core services will be reviewed.
- There has been a 19 M dollar cut in funding for the Medicaid program. A task force has been established to address how this will impact Utah.
- With the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (T.A.N.F.) regulations there are requirements that each state will need to meet the 50% customer participation rate. The deadline to meet the participation rate is October 1st. It is anticipated that Utah will achieve the participation rate by October 1st.
- An update was provided on labor market information for the State. Utah remains one of the top five states in the country in the area of employment growth. Experts are saying they are expecting an employment peak, and the economy is currently in a healthy situation.
- The Council of Councils meeting is scheduled October 12th at the University Park Hotel, 480 Wakara Way, Salt Lake City, UT.

6. **Regional Director's Report**

- Randy Hopkins thanked all Bear River North Regional Council members for their partnership and support of the task forces and the full Council.
- The Department will need to attain the 50% participation rate for TANF customers. One way to increase customer participation is through the establishment of worksites. Randy asked the Council

members who are employers to consider the possibility of establishing worksites at their businesses.

- Budget cuts will change the way that the Department does business in the future.
- An overview of the Department was provided:
 - D.W.S. is 80% federally funded, and only 20% state funded. The Government is reducing funding for many of the social services programs. Reductions to the Medicaid program were cited as an example.
 - Executive Management has an objective of maintaining positions in rural Utah. As a result, functions and the responsibility of supervising the rural staff have been centralized. Through the use of technology, positions will not need to be sent to Salt Lake. The rural workload could have been transferred to the Central Region. In order to maintain the rural positions, over thirty staff from the Eastern and Western regions are telecommuting.
 - D.W.S. has been utilizing technology to image cases and pursue telecommuting. Many states are not yet imaging customer cases, and have not yet explored the concept of telecommuting. Staff who are telecommuting are able to carry higher caseloads.
 - The Department is looking at many innovative ideas to identify what they can do to continue to provide services with less funding.
- The North Region has been very effective in reducing staff levels through attrition.
- The Department will continue to look for increasing efficiency as federal funding will be reduced \$6M.

7. **Employer Seminars / Job Fairs Update**

Gary Kennison, D.W.S. Business Consultant, reported that Employer Seminars would be offered as workshops to assist employers. Event flyers and speaker information will be available on the D.W.S. website, jobs.utah.gov. Notice of the events will be posted a month in advance. Gary noted that if Council members are interested in being e-mailed the notice of the Employer Seminars they can subscribe to through the jobs.utah.gov website. Gary added that the events are listed statewide and that Council members may attend the events at the location of their choice.

The Employer Newsletter has been changed to have a focus of “here is what is coming up”. Employers will be sent the newsletter on a quarterly basis.

Job Fair information is also posted to the website. If the council members are interested in participating in the event, they may contact Gary Kennison or any one of the D.W.S. Business Consultants.

Gary reported that in Weber County and Davis County, D.W.S. hosts monthly employer seminars. Topics include Workplace Diversity (September), Employment Law (October), and Top Rewards on a Shoe String Budget (November). Also, this year they have covered the topic of “generations in the workplace”. There is a charge of \$10 for the seminars to cover the event with a full breakfast. The Business Consultants will be working to offer the Employer Seminars in the Bear River area. They will be looking at providing a quarterly seminar and partnering with Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM) to bring in speakers. Gary will provide additional information as it becomes available. The Employer Seminar information will be kept up-to-date on the jobs.utah.gov website under the employers tab.

Peggy Madsen commented that the Employer Committee would be glad to work with the Business Consultants to help put the seminars together.

Vern Gunnell offered the Bridgerland A.T.C. and Brigham Bridgerland campus as an available resource for the meeting locations.

A Job Fair is being planned in September for the Bear River area. The Job Fair will be conducted the first Thursday in September. There are 44 employer slots. There have been upwards of 2,000 job applicants in attendance in the past and as many are anticipated this year. The Job Fair will be held at the B.A.T.C. Employers can contact Ted Nyman at TNYMAN@utah.gov or at (435) 792-0302.

In June, the Department provided a job fair for Veteran's at the Davis Applied Technology College (D.A.T.C.). Gary reported that it went very well with a 72 employers in attendance. All of the employers were employers who were actively recruiting. Over 2,000 job seekers attended. D.W.S. also partnered with L.D.S. Employment Services for the event. The Job Fair will be offered next year if employers are interested in participating.

D.W.S. partnered with the Department of Corrections to conduct a "Second-Chance" job fair August 3rd at the Ogden Weber A.T.C. The job seekers are transferring out of the State's Corrections system. The employers who will be recruiting are aware of the barriers that these job seekers have. Agencies that will be helping customers to be successful with their employment will be on-site. Gary reported that it went well as 350 job seekers, and 10 employers.

The "55 Plus" Job Fair was held at the Clearfield E.C. They are considering holding the event at the Davis County Fair grounds in the future.

Susan Thackeray asked that a "55 Plus" Job Fair be planned for the Bear River Area.

Gary said that the Department would absolutely be interested in providing a "55 Plus" Job Fair and asked that Susan contact Ted Nyman to begin the planning.

8. **Other Business**

Debbie Sparks, Logan Area Manager, invited all Council members to grand opening for the new Logan Employment Center on August 15th from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The address is 180 North 100 West in Logan.

Debbie reported the following information -

- Council members were invited to use the area in the new center that will be used for employee recruitments.
- Starbucks will be a new employer in the Logan area. Major recruitments are expected to be held in the office, as within 2 hours 200 people were involved in the first recruitment.
- QWEST had the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new center. Governor Huntsman spoke at the ribbon cutting. Debbie reported that the call center is the largest in the nation. They have hired 500 staff and will be hiring additional staff.
- Social Security staff will be available in the new Employment Center twice each month starting in September.
- The Business Services staff are providing more one-on-one services with employers to help them learn how to use the D.W.S. online services.
- Currently, there are over 500 job openings in the Logan area, which indicates a healthy job market.
- There will be 25 computers available to job seekers in the job connection room. Debbie noted that 2-3 days a week the room is completely filled.

Jim Hooker asked if entry-level wages have increased.

Debbie responded that the entry-level wages have slightly increased and there will be an upward trend.

Vern Gunnell reported that a company called West Liberty Foods out of Iowa, which is a meat processing plant, would be locating in Tremonton. With three large buildings, theirs will be in an accessible location. They will be recruiting individuals next fall.

Malt-O-Meal will be expanding, and they will be hiring with their contractors. The positions will start at about \$50,000 per year.

Vern reported that there are businesses that are looking for 1,000 employees at the current time. They are asking if the employees could be transported to the worksite. Vernal and Roosevelt are booked with the number of employees who need housing.

QWEST hired 300 staff now and will increase to 500. With their success in Cache Valley, call centers in Montana and Washington have been closed. Vern anticipates additional hiring. The entry-level wage is \$9 an hour.

The Bridgerland A.T.C. is working with the high schools to inform them of the jobs and training programs that will be available to them.

Susan Thackeray shared that Utah is 4th in the nation as a growing state. There is a summit on Thursday, October 19th that will be looking at the growth in the states population and employment growth. It will start at 9:00 a.m. at the Delta Center. This will be a half-day event with lunch.

Susan noted that in regard to the number of businesses coming into the area there is an increase in the need for housing.

Peggy Madsen asked if the jobs in Vernal are dependent on the housing.

Vern reported that the housing is critical right now, as the people cannot find affordable housing.

9. **Public Comment**

No general public representatives or non-members of the Regional Council attended the meeting.

10. **Adjourn**

Dawn Skorka thanked the Council members for their attendance. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.